

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
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Defense Attaché Association
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Commander Carmen, thank you so much for that introduction. When I get an introduction that kind, and that glowing, I always wish two people were here. I wish my mother and father were still with us. My father would be very proud; my mother would believe every word of it. I want to thank all of you, particularly Commodore David Anson, and the Center for a New American Security for organizing this event and for your roles in thinking the way you do about the issues that face us all.

Looking around the room and seeing representatives from so many countries reminds me that the United States is a partner in the global maritime community – and that – like the old proverb says, friends make better protection than fences. It is in that spirit of friendship that I am here today. Again, thank you for having me.

Bringing together this group of military professionals for discussions such as this one is incredibly important. The fact that this group of officers and civilian experts can sit down and discuss weighty issues clearly demonstrates the bond of shared military service and the bond of mutual respect transcends all national boundaries. The Defense Attaché Association and other meetings of the international military community here in DC are crucial to maintaining open lines of communication across political boundaries. And the Center for a New American Security in facilitating this, is making sure that the issues that need to be addressed are addressed in thoughtful and constructive ways; thank you for your participation and for your service.

It is these face to face meetings and the personal relationships they represent that form a common foundation and a common starting point in all our international discussions. And it is your work, so many in this room, as the military representative of your country that complements, sometimes even sets the stage for diplomatic engagement among your civilian colleagues.

I am particularly happy to be here today to talk about one of the issues I think is important to us both individually and collectively – our utilization of natural resources and its relationship to national security, particularly in the naval domain. When I came to this job almost exactly six months ago, the use of energy became one of the defining issues in my time as Secretary of the Navy.

National security, energy, and natural resource utilization are inextricably linked – and it is clear that the decisions our countries make today with respect to energy usage, ocean management, and arctic policy will chart our course for decades to come.

Very simply, military organizations rely too much on fossil fuels. Whether it is the ships we sail, or the planes we fly, or the vehicles that we drive, the world's military organizations run mainly on fossil fuels. And on a larger scale, our societies and our economies rely on fossil fuel too much as well. As many developing nations continue their economic expansion, the world's reliance on fossil fuels will inevitably grow.

The global implications of expanding demand and continued reliance on fossil fuels are significant. The stock of proven fossil fuel reserves worldwide is finite, costs will almost certainly continue to go up, and the current way we extract and use fossil fuels too often harms the environment and contributes to climate change.

As a national security issue, very few nations have the ability to produce and refine enough fuels internally or within their regions to meet the demands even of their military services. This demand for energy connects us all. But from a pragmatic standpoint it means that should any large-scale shock occur to the global oil trade, everyone suffers, and a very large source of potential conflict could arise out of that suffering.

I think that as the world looks long-term, out to the next fifty years or so, we will eventually see that our present pattern of consumption and environmental harm is ultimately unsustainable.

I see the significant challenges and global security implications of climate change and energy use as one of the great challenges for us, and it's for these reasons that last month I put the United States Navy and Marine Corps on a path to build upon our present investments in energy reform and dramatically change the way we use and produce energy. We will significantly reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and shift to alternative and renewable sources like biofuels, wind, solar, geothermal, and ocean energy.

I did this so that as a Navy and as a Marine Corps we can lead our own nation in changing energy usage, improving our warfighting capabilities while we do it, strengthening our own energy security by reducing reliance on external sources, and contributing to our societal and global obligation to promote a better environment. I look forward to working with the international partners here today in finding a solution to some of these issues.

The program for the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps has five ambitious targets:

First, by 2020, half of the Navy and Marine Corps total energy consumption for ships, aircraft, tanks, vehicles, and shore installations will come from alternative sources.

Second, by 2020 we will produce at least half of our shore-based energy requirements on our installations and half our bases will be net-zero in terms of consumption. We will boost our usage of renewable energy and in some cases we will supply power *to* the electric grid from sources like solar, wind, ocean, or geothermal sources generated on our bases. In fact, we are already doing this at one installation; China Lake, California, where our on-base systems generate over 20 times the amount of energy the base itself uses.

Third, by 2015 we will reduce petroleum usage in our 50,000 strong commercial, non-combat fleet of vehicles by half. We're going to do it by replacing our current fleet, as they go out of service, with a new composite fleet of flex fuel vehicles, hybrid electric vehicles, and neighborhood electric vehicles. Moving to biofuels and electric vehicles will benefit the local communities where our bases are located, and I hope will spur adoption of similar vehicles.

Fourth, we're going to deploy a Strike Group by 2016 composed completely of alternatively powered ships, and we will deploy it in support of operations overseas.

Finally, we are changing the way we award Navy and Marine Corps contracts. We are going to hold industry contractually accountable for meeting energy targets and system efficiency requirements. But maybe just as importantly, we are going to reward industry for their efforts to make their own facilities more energy efficient and less reliant on fossil fuels.

These goals are ambitious and they require development and usage of new technologies, some of which very frankly, don't exist right now. But nothing truly worthwhile can be accomplished without first taking bold steps. I hope that as we begin to move towards these ambitious targets, we can look at some of the outstanding work being done internationally on things like alternative energies and work with our global partners to identify, develop, and adopt new technology that can be used by military and governments worldwide for the benefit of the planet we all share.

I don't think I'm so naïve as to think that energy reform within the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps alone will solve all the security issues associated with the exploitation of our natural resources. Fossil fuel use is just one component of a much larger picture. We also have to look at the effects of global warming on different regions of the world and the security implications of rising sea levels.

According to various scientific projections, global warming could result in an Arctic Ocean free of summer sea ice within 25-50 years. That will create a Northwest Passage that is ice-free for much of the year, allowing for new and much more economic shipping routes with all the attendant economic opportunities for growth and negative environmental impacts that come with increased traffic. An ice-free Arctic in summer will also create opportunities for mineral and fossil fuel exploitation that are not now available.

In order to manage the opportunities that will be open to Arctic nations, and mitigate potential sources of conflict and harmful environmental side-effects, every nation that uses the Arctic must make a commitment to responsible use.

A coordinated approach to the Arctic doesn't exist yet, but I am hopeful that over the next few years the first international efforts to address that shortfall will bear fruit, and we will all approach the Arctic with care and consideration. That fruit will be the harvest from the toil of so many joint efforts like those of this association, to bring people from around the world together to address our shared interest and resolve our shared challenges.

That same care and consideration has to be applied to management of our oceans and fisheries. We all belong to the global maritime commons; the ocean connects us all and sustains us all. But overfishing has caused many fisheries to experience a tragedy of the commons. What has been good for individuals has not been good for all, and in trying to exploit fisheries for maximum economic benefit, some have collapsed.

Others, like the Eastern Atlantic Bluefin Tuna, are in serious danger. Without action, in the future fishermen will have to range further afield in search of their catches. While our countries can individually manage those fisheries completely contained within our own national waters through the enforcement of quotas or innovative share trading of a percentage of catches, a lot of fisheries exist in international waters and therefore require an international solution.

I am encouraged by increased attention placed on sustainable fishing by the international community. Just this month, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) made some hard decisions to restrict the tuna catch by one quarter, and the commission limited the purse seine fishing season by half.

More action is needed and enforcement measures in general need improvement, but this is a starting point.

Arctic policy and fishery protection are global challenges that will require global cooperation. In these, we can draw some lessons from the international cooperation against piracy off the East Coast of Africa. Piracy is, after all, an economically motivated attack upon the free use of the oceans as a shared resource. It specifically targets the means of transportation for the vast majority of goods in the global market. And the international response to piracy as a discrete threat is illustrative of what the international community can accomplish when we work together.

Since the height of piracy attacks earlier this year, we have seen the pirates sailing much farther out to sea in search of targets and a decrease in the success of attacks as a result of this combined international patrol effort in concert with better safety and preventative measures employed by the shipping community.

Off the Horn of Africa there are over 20 nations that are participating in anti-piracy efforts. Some are contributing ships, others aircraft, and some are prosecuting the criminals ashore that were apprehended at sea. The close coordination in effect is only possible because of the work done at the tactical and operational level, things like setting up common communications, establishing procedures for contact, and sharing information between the forces on station.

The international community has united against a common threat, and we've created mechanisms to deal with that threat.

We ought to be able to do this for other security challenges. Piracy is not an unique threat. Certainly piracy is an immediate threat, and because it is immediate, we have done a good job in addressing it. But will we as nations fail to act on other issues because the time horizon just isn't as close? That really is the question we'll all grapple with.

As a global community, we are beginning to take action on some of these longer-term things. As a global community, we are beginning to address energy concerns and the energy produced by alternative means is growing every year. The UN and Arctic nations are beginning to address responsible use of the polar region, and commercial bodies are beginning to regulate use of the maritime commons. Our problems are the result of our own actions, and therefore the solutions can be the result of our own actions.

Our time, and our planet depend on it, and I am confident that it's going to happen and everybody will all do our part.

So I want to thank you, again. Thank you for allowing me to speak. Thank you for the work that you're doing together. And, thank you for the broad and far-reaching look that you're taking on some of the common challenges that we all share together. Thank you very much.